

Iowa Outdoors
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.iowadnr.gov

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FISH FROM IOWA LAKES EXCEED MERCURY ADVISORY LEVEL

DES MOINES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has confirmed the presence of mercury above consumption advisory levels in tissue samples from largemouth bass collected from Mormon Trail Lake, Lake Geode, North Banner and South Banner lakes.

Individuals should consume no more than one meal per week of largemouth bass caught from Mormon Trail Lake, Lake Geode and North Banner and South Banner lakes.

Mercury was also found above consumption levels in tissue samples from redhorse collected from the Upper Iowa River, prompting the DNR to issue an advisory for all species of fish caught from County Road 76 to County Road W20, in Allamakee County. Individuals should consume no more than one meal per week of any fish caught from the Upper Iowa River from County Road 76 to County Road W20.

The Upper Iowa River was on the consumption advisory list previously for mercury in predator species, from the lower dam in eastern Winneshiek County upstream to County Road W20, northwest of Decorah. The new advisory extends the length of river covered by the advisory downstream and expands the advisory to include all species.

Every year Iowa DNR biologists collect samples of fish for laboratory analysis to determine the wholesomeness of fish for human consumption. Edible portions of these fish are analyzed by certified labs and results are compared to consumption advisory levels as identified by the DNR and Iowa Department of Public Health in the state's consumption advisory protocol. The risk-based protocol went into effect in 2006 and is

based on US EPA and FDA guidance. This protocol is the basis for issuing consumption advisories for Iowa waters.

This marks the eleventh current consumption advisory for fish in Iowa.

Iowa has an existing one meal per week consumption advisory for largemouth bass due to elevated levels of mercury in Nine Eagles Lake in Decatur County.

Existing river advisories of one meal per week of predator fish species for mercury include the Cedar River from Floyd County north to the Minnesota border, mercury in the Upper Iowa River from the lower dam in eastern Winneshiek County upstream 24 miles and for mercury in the Volga River, including the Little Volga and the North Branch Volga River from the town of Volga upstream in Clayton County.

Mississippi River Pool 12, which is the area between Lock and Dam 11 in Dubuque and Lock and Dam 12 at Bellevue in Jackson County, has a consumption advisory of one meal per week for walleye, sauger, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, white bass and northern pike.

The DNR has information on these contaminants and consumption advisories on its Fish and Fishing webpage at www.iowadnr.gov/fish/index.html then click on Fish Consumption Advisories in the navigation bar on the left.

Fish are part of a healthy diet. For information on the benefits of eating fish or what types of fish are safe to eat, visit the Iowa Department of Public Health's webpage at www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/common/pdf/enf/fish_health_issues.pdf

CHLORDANE ADVISORY DROPPED AT TWO IOWA LAKES; NEW PCB ADVISORY ISSUED AT ONE LAKE

The Iowa DNR has removed the one meal per week advisory due to elevated levels of chlordane in Cedar Lake in Cedar Rapids and the Ottumwa Lagoons in Ottumwa after samples collected in 2004 and 2006 showed chlordane was below the one meal per week advisory level.

The advisory included carp and channel catfish at Cedar Lake and channel catfish at the Ottumwa Lagoons.

Although the chlordane advisory has been removed at Cedar Lake, the current one meal per week advisory for carp and channel catfish due to elevated levels of Polychlorinated Biphenyls, referred to as PCBs, remains in place.

The DNR has issued a new fish consumption advisory for Cedar Bend Lake, in Linn County. Individuals should consume no more than one meal per week of carp due to elevated levels of PCBs found in tissue samples collected in 2005 and 2006.

For more information, contact Marion Conover, chief of fisheries, at 515-281-5208.

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LONG WINTER EXPECTED TO AFFECT FISH POPULATIONS

SPIRIT LAKE - With each passing day of ice cover, there is a growing likelihood that several Iowa lakes and ponds will experience some level of fish kill, and fisheries biologists across the state are keeping an eye on the oxygen levels in their area lakes, and hoping for an early thaw.

“We lose fish every year during the winter, but this has been a hard winter and we are expecting to see more lakes with some winter mortality, and a few lakes with more extensive winter kills,” said Jim Wahl, supervisor for fisheries in northwest Iowa.

He said even during the most severe winter, a complete kill is seldom observed. The fisheries staff has been monitoring lakes and will conduct surveys shortly after ice out to see the extent this winter has had on fish populations, Wahl said. Anglers with underwater cameras have called in reports of seeing dead fish at a few public lakes.

“Our lakes froze tight early and have been under ice in some areas for three and a half months. We are still finding 24 to 28 inches of ice so it will be around for some time. The last time we saw a winter like this was in 2000-2001,” he said.

When lakes freeze early and receive a blanket of snow, it effectively shuts off the sunlight from reaching aquatic plants, which stops photosynthesis and the flow of oxygen into the water. The longer the ice and snow cover the lake, the less oxygen is in the water and available to the fish. Wahl said low oxygen levels have been found in a variety of lakes, from the north to the south.

The DNR has taken steps to prevent winter fish kills from low oxygen by placing aeration systems at lakes with a history of winter kills. Aeration systems keep a section of the lake from freezing allowing some oxygen into the water.

“We expect some fish loss but we just won’t know the extent of it until we can get our survey boats on the water and sample lakes that had low winter oxygen readings,” Wahl said.

For more information, contact Wahl at 712-336-1840.

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MARINA PROJECT ENTERS FINAL STAGE

STORM LAKE – The final stage of the 3 year, \$3 million Storm Lake Marina project is expected to begin in March and be completed before the July 4 holiday. During this stage, contractors will modify the marina shoreline creating more room for the concession plaza, grade and build a new parking lot, remove the existing two lane boat ramp and install two new two lane boat ramps and complete the concession building.

Workers will also install previously contracted courtesy docks, gas dock and loading docks at the boat ramp, and an additional fishing pier. The marina will offer gas when the work is completed.

“The marina has a pretty popular boat ramp, so we planned this final phase with a short timeline and a goal for completion on June 30,” said Don Labate, facilities engineer for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). During the construction, the existing parking lot and boat ramps will be closed for demolition and construction from middle March until completion and the area will not be accessible to the public.

“We planned the work in phases so only the parking lot area would be closed while the east half of the property, including the boat docks, would be available during construction. Boat owners will have access to their slips, but will need to use a different ramp to launch their boats this spring,” Labate said.

The concession building is currently under construction and the DNR is working to hire a concessionaire to maintain the entire property. The concessionaire would be responsible for the boat repair business, boat sales, general concessions including boat rentals, leasing slips and gas service. The concession building has space planned and available for a future restaurant. There will be no alcohol sales or consumption in the buildings.

Labate said construction bids are being accepted for the parking lot and boat ramp projects.

“This area is going to be really nice once all the work is done,” he said. “The concession building will be much more upscale than what was there before.” He said the parking lot will also be an improvement from the past, and will include permeable paving to filter rainwater before it enters the lake.

“The parking lot was designed to filter any materials out before the water enters the lake and is just one more way that we can protect the quality of the lake,” Labate said.

The marina still has about 25 boat slips available for rent in 2008, and any interested boat owners should call the DNR office at Lake View at 712-657-2638 and request to be put on a list until the concessionaire is hired.

For more information, contact Mick Klemesrud at 515-281-8653.

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Iowa Fishing Report

www.iowadnr.gov

March 11, 2008

Ice fishing reports are issued every other week while quality ice conditions exist. For current information on ice fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report.

Southeast

Mississippi River Pools 16 to 20: Ice fishing in the backwaters of **Pools 16 to 20** is not advisable. Warmer temperatures and rising water this predicted week will make for poor ice conditions. In **Pool 16**, tailwater stage is 6.64 feet. River stage is forecasted to rise to 9.2 feet by this weekend. Walleyes and saugers are biting below Lock and Dam 15 on jig/minnow combinations and jig/twister tails. Anglers are catching 2 to 3 pound saugers. The river is accessible at the Marquette St. boat ramp in Davenport.

Tailwater stage in **Pool 17** at Muscatine is 5.47 feet and is expected to rise to 7.2 feet by the weekend. The boat ramp in Muscatine is open. Walleye and sauger fishing has been slow in the tailwaters. There have been reports of channel catfish being caught in Muscatine Slough on shad guts.

In **Pool 18**, tailwater stage is 7.33 feet and forecasted to rise to 9.1 feet by this weekend. The river is accessible at the Toolesboro landing. There are some chunks of ice floating in the river so take caution when boating. Walleye and sauger fishing has been slow in the tailwaters.

Tailwater stage in **Pool 19** is 4.7 feet and is forecasted to rise to 6.1 feet by the weekend. No fishing report. In **Pool 20**, tailwater stage is at 7.21 feet and is forecasted to rise to 8.5 feet by the weekend. No fishing report.

Lake Darling (Washington): There is about 12 inches of ice. Heavy rains early last week has made the ice heave in several places with new ice forming over the old ice. Not much ice fishing going on.

Lake Belva Deer (Keokuk): Fishing has slowed with not much angler activity. There is melt water flowing into the lake so be careful around any feeder creeks.

Lake Geode (Henry): Extremely poor ice conditions. Going out onto the ice is not recommended.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): The lake level has risen 4 feet from melting snow and ice. The ice around the lake edge is variable in thickness so use caution.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): The ice around the shoreline is variable in thickness and the main lake has open water. Most ice fishing in the area has been on the Tug Forks lakes on the north side of Lake Sugema.

Lake Wapello (Davis): The ice around the shoreline is variable in thickness so use caution.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Southwest

Big Creek (Polk): Crappies are still being caught using small jigs tipped with a minnow or wax worm in 25 to 30 feet of water. Bluegills up to 9 inches are being caught fishing over the cedar tree piles or other structure on small jigs tipped with a wax worm. A few walleyes are being caught on minnows.

Dale Maffitt (Polk): Yellow perch are being caught near the bottom with a minnow.

Hickory Grove (Story): Fishing has been slow. A few bluegills are being caught fishing near structure using small jigs tipped with a wax worm.

Don Williams (Story): Fishing has been slow. Bluegills are being caught during the day fishing near structure using small jigs tipped with a wax worm. Crappies are being caught fishing around dusk.

Ahquabi (Warren): Bluegills up to 10 inches and a few redears are being caught fishing structure during the day.

Rock Creek (Jasper): Crappies are being caught fishing structure at dusk. Bluegills are being caught during the day using small jigs tipped with a wax worm.

Des Moines River: Walleyes are being caught below the dams at Red Rock and Saylorville.

Contact Ben Dodd at (515) 432-2823, Ext.108, for information on the ABOVE area lakes

Fogle Lake (Ringgold): Ice conditions are good. A few bluegills are being caught in deeper water near structure with wax worms and minnows. Some crappie can be caught suspended at various depths.

Lake of Three Fires (Taylor): Ice conditions are good. Lots of nice bluegills are being caught with wax worms over the tree pile 100 yards north of the center of the dam. Crappie can be caught using minnows suspended at various depths near the tree piles or along the old creek channel.

Icaria (Adams): Ice conditions are good. A few nice bluegills and crappies are being caught with wax worms and minnows. Some walleye activity has centered on the old road bed that crosses the main arm.

Three Mile Lake (Union): Ice conditions are good. Good numbers of bluegills are being caught next to deep structure on wax worms. Crappies seem to be harder to find, but a few are also being caught next to deep structure or from the old road bed edges. Some perch have been caught near the pump house point.

Twelve Mile Lake (Union): Ice conditions are good. Nice bluegills are being caught with wax worms. Some real nice crappies have been caught suspended over the old road beds on minnows. Some walleye have been picked up on the old road beds.

Walnut Creek Marsh (Ringgold): Some real nice bluegills and crappies can be caught. Depths are usually less than 4 feet and fish are extremely shallow.

Farm ponds have had variable reports. Ice conditions are deteriorating.

Contact Gary Sobotka at (641) 464-3108 for information on the ABOVE area lakes.

Ice conditions have been reported as good with area lakes having 12 to 15 inches.

Greenfield Lake (Adair): Bluegill and crappie fishing has been fair. Try small jigs tipped with wax worms or minnows around structure in 16 to 20 feet of water.

Anita (Cass): Fishing has been fair for 7 to 9-inch bluegills.

Manawa (Pottawattamie): Crappie fishing is good with 9 to 12-inch fish biting on jigs and minnows.

Anderson Area/North Pond (Montgomery): Fishing is good for 8-inch bluegills on teardrops tipped with a wax worm. Crappies have been fair on using minnows in the evenings.

Southwest Iowa Farm Ponds: The best fishing reports have been from privately owned small ponds for bluegill and in the larger ponds, crappie, using teardrops tipped with wax worm. Ice thickness is 15 inches.

Contact Bryan Hayes at (712) 769-2587 for information on the ABOVE area lakes.

For more information on general fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

Northwest

Walleye season on West Okoboji, East Okoboji and Spirit lakes in Dickinson County closed Feb. 15. It will re-open on May 2.

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): Bluegills are fair on the Grade, Trickles Slough and Anglers Bay. Anglers are catching 9 to 10-inch yellow perch and a few crappies in Trickles Slough.

West Okoboji Lake (Dickinson): Fishing is improving for crappie, yellow perch and bluegills. A word of caution: the ice around the points is beginning to thin, but the main bays still have nearly 30 inches of ice.

Yellow Smoke Lake (Crawford): Anglers are catching nice sized bluegills on teardrops and wax worms.

Crawford Creek Lake (Ida): Fishing has been good for bluegills and 10 to 12-inch crappie, but ice melt is starting to make the water turbid.

Storm Lake (Buena Vista): Anglers are still catching a few walleyes. The lake has 30 inches of ice.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Walleye fishing has been fair, with the best action at sunrise and sunset using minnows and jigging spoons. Remember Clear Lake has a 14-inch minimum length on walleye with only one of the fish over 22 inches and a daily limit of three. Yellow bass fishing has been fair on small jigging spoons tipped with minnow heads with the best time during the hour of sunrise. Fish are being caught at sunset as well. The Island area is the best spot for yellow bass.

Blue Pit – Lester Milligan Park (Cerro Gordo): An additional 1,500 10 to 12-inch rainbow trout will be stocked on March 12. Anglers using small jigs, wax worms and the prepared trout baits should find excellent opportunities to get some late ice trout in Blue Pit. A trout fee is required to fish for trout and there is a daily limit of five.

Interstate Park Pond (Franklin): Anglers are catching bluegill, yellow perch and a few crappies. Sorting is required, but acceptable size fish are available. The morning and evening periods are the best times.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

Northeast

Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15: The backwaters in **Pools 9 to 15** have about 20 inches of ice. The main channel is expecting a 2-1/2 foot rise in the water level, so there is a good chance the tailwaters will be open on March 16. The ice conditions in the tailwater at Guttenberg are deteriorating rapidly and anglers should use extreme caution in this area and in other areas with flow. In **Pool 13**, anglers are catching crappies and bluegills on **Browns Lake**.

Shell Rock River (Butler): Anglers are starting to take nice catches of walleyes on the Shell Rock with the rivers beginning to open up. Key in on the deeper pools or outside bends of the river using jigs tipped with minnows.

Cedar River (Black Hawk): With the upcoming warmer weather conditions, walleye fishing could be good later this week on the Cedar as long as the snow melt is slow and gradual. Try fishing the deeper pools and outside bends using jigs tipped with a minnow.

Maquoketa River (Delaware): Walleye fishing has been fair to good fishing jigs tipped with a minnow below the dam on Lake Delhi.

Big Woods Lake and **Brinker Lake** (Black Hawk): Crappie fishing has been fair to good, but anglers may have to sort through smaller fish but larger crappies have been reported. Use ice fishing jig tipped with wax worm or fishing live minnow under bobber suspended around structure.

Sweet Marsh (Bremer): Nice catches of bluegill and crappies have been reported from here. Bluegills and crappies tend to run average size with some larger crappies for the taking. Look for structure in and around submerged trees through the ice.

Lake Delhi (Delaware): Bluegills and crappies are good. Delhi has a consistent bite when other lakes are slow.

Lake Meyer (Winnebago): Fishing has slowed, but anglers are still picking up fish suspended around brush piles. The best time to fish is around late afternoon.

Hendricks Lake (Howard): Fishing is slow but nice-sized bluegills and crappies are out there. The best fishing seems to be early morning or late evening.

Volga Lake (Fayette): Fishing has been slow. Try fishing for crappies just under the ice.

Lake Oelwein (Fayette): Some anglers have been successful catching smaller bluegills and decent size crappies on wax worms.

Trout streams are open, accessible and fishable.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

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